Central European University, Department of Gender Studies

**Queer Ecologies: Gender, Sexuality, and the Environment**

MA Level Course (2 credits)  
Fall Term 2017

Marianna Szczygielska Office hours: TBA

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Class time: Monday 11.00-12.40  
Place: Z 412

**Course description**

What do major environmental crises, like pollution, extinction, climate change or depletion of natural recourses have to do with the embodied notions of sexuality, gender, and race? What is the role of discourses on Nature in shaping the situated and site-specific understandings of sexuality/gender/race, and how have feminist and queer academics approached these issues? What can these theoretical accounts offer for environmental justice activism? Stemming from these questions, this course introduces the nascent field of queer ecology, which combines eco-critique and queer theory to emphasize the interconnectedness between the discourses on nature and the embodied politics of sexuality/gender/race. The course is designed to provide a framework for addressing these questions by building on ecofeminist traditions, queer and critical race studies interventions, and imagining posthumanist futures to challenge the deadlock in the conventional environmental politics debates. Through readings, class discussions, and practical assignments we will explore and map out queer ecology’s major concerns in relation to various threads of scholarly inquiry along which this field has emerged – queer theory, ecofeminism, human and animal geographies, posthumanism and animal studies, postcolonial theory, and feminist new materialism. During the seminar sessions we will probe the idea of queer ecology as a method rooted in activism (ranging from pink to green politics), art, and running through various academic disciplines.

**Learning goals and outcomes**

At the end of this course students should be able to:

* Identify and efficiently locate key concepts and main arguments within eco-criticism, queer theory, and feminist new materialisms;
* Have a broader understanding of major debates within environmental and queer politics and theories;
* Critically asses, compare, and link class readings according to their theoretical arguments and methods;
* Demonstrate public speaking and debating abilities through engaging in class discussions;
* Methodology: develop a basic ethnographic toolbox through practical tasks: fieldwork observation and writing a report.
* Practice creative writing skills during a class workshop and academic writing assignments.
* Identify and research a topic of theoretical relevance to the themes addressed in the course material and find additional scholarship;
* Prepare an academic essay that reflects critical engagement with the relevant literature and student’s original insights.

**Course requirements**

1. Attendance

This is a discussion-based course and therefore, students are required to attend all sessions. In class you are expected to be able to critically engage with the assigned readings: express your opinions, ask questions, analyze and debate the issues posed in the texts. You can miss one class, but with every other missed class you will be required to send a reaction paper on the assigned readings in this session.

2. Class Presentation

After Week 1, each student will choose a reading from the assigned material and in the beginning of the given class will summarize the main argument of the text and raise 2-3 questions for discussion. The presentation should take approx. 10 minutes. Students are encouraged to use various mediums (videos, music, performance and visual arts, etc.) and creative forms of expression.

3. Fieldtrip report

In week 5 the class will be held at the Hungarian Natural History Museum as part of the fieldtrip. Students are required to read the assigned texts prior to the class! We will have a discussion engaging with the texts at the Museum. Students are asked to take field notes during this session. They will later use them to write a short field report based on their observations, the subject literature, and any other references they find relevant (pop-cultural, activist, auto-biographical, archival materials, etc.). The reports should be **500-700 words** long, and are due Week 7.

4. Final Paper

The final paper should be **1500-2500 words** long. The paper is expected to critically engage with one or two of the several themes developed in the class. It has to be based on required and suggested readings from the syllabus, as well as additional sources and literature. Students are encouraged to bring in their own examples, analyze original case studies, and engage with matters that they are directly affected by. By week 10 students are required to send an outline of the research paper (preliminary title, 3 bibliography titles, and a short abstract). I am available for consultations during office hours. Papers are due in print one week after the term ends. No late papers will be accepted.

**Grading**

Active participation in class discussions 30%

Class Presentation 20%

Fieldtrip report 20%

Final Paper 30%

**Class schedule**

**PART I Feminist Ecologies**

**Week 1: Introducing Queer Ecologies**

Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands, “Unnatural Passions?: Notes Toward a Queer Ecology,” *Invisible Culture. An Electronic Journal for Visual Culture*, Issue 9, 2005. Available online

<http://www.rochester.edu/in_visible_culture/Issue_9/title9.html> (20 pages)

Gandy, Matthew. 2012. “Queer Ecology: Nature, Sexuality, and Heterotopic Alliances.” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 30 (4): 727 – 747.

Further reading:

Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands and Bruce Erickson, “A Genealogy of Queer Ecologies,” in *Queer Ecologies: Sex, Nature, Politics, Desire*, ed. Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands and Bruce Erickson (Indiana University Press, 2010). Pp. 1-47

**Week 2: Ecofeminism and Eco-critique**

Val Plumwood, 1991. “Nature, Self, and Gender: Feminism, Environmental Philosophy, and the Critique of Rationalism,” *Hypatia*, Vol. 6 Issue 1: 3-27.

Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva, *Ecofeminism* (London: Zed Books, 1993), p. 1-21.

Further reading:

Taylor, Dorceta. “Women of Color, Environmental Justice, and Ecofeminism,” in *Ecofeminism: Women, Culture, Nature*. Kay Warren, ed. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997, p. 38-81.

Karen J. Warren, “The Power and the Promise of Ecological Feminism,” *Environmental Ethics* 12, no. 2 (1990): 125–46.

**Week 3: Queering EcoPolitics**

Gaard, Greta. 1997. “Toward a Queer Ecofeminism.” Hypatia 12 (1): 114–37.

Sandilands, Catriona. 1994. “Lavender’s Green? Some Thoughts on Queer(y)ing Environmental Politics.” *UnderCurrents* (May): 20–24.

Further reading:

Gaard, Greta. 2011. “Ecofeminism Revisited: Rejecting Essentialism and Re-Placing Species in a Material Feminist Environmentalism.” Feminist Formations 23(2): 26-53.

**PART II Erotic Landscapes**

**Week 4: Mapping Desire: Beyond Rural Lesbians and Gay Gentrifiers**

Cerullo, Margaret, and Phyllis Ewen. 1984. “The American Family Goes Camping: Gender, Family and the Politics of Space.” *Antipode* 16.3: 35–46.

Valentine, Gill. 1995. “Out and About: Geographies of Lesbian Landscapes.” *International* *Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 19 (1): 96–111.

Darren J. Patrick, “The Matter of Displacement: A Queer Urban Ecology of New York City’s High Line,” *Social & Cultural Geography* 15, no. 8 (November 17, 2014): 920–41.

Further reading:  
Herring, Scott. 2007. “Out of the Closets, Into the Woods: *RFD,* Country Women, and the Post-Stonewall Emergence of Queer Anti-Urbanism.” *American Quarterly* 59.2: 341–72.  
  
Chamberlain, Kathleen, and Victoria Somogyi. 2006. “You Know I Ain’t Queer”: *Brokeback Mountain* as the Not-Gay Cowboy Movie. *Intertexts* (Lubbock) 10.2: 129–44, 195–96.

David Bell. 2000. “Farm Boys and Wild Men: Rurality, Masculinity, and Homosexuality.” *Rural Sociology* 65 (4): 547–561.

**Week 5: Exhibiting Sexuality**

**Fieldtrip to the Natural History Museum in Budapest (**Ludovika tér 2-6)

Haraway, Donna Jeanne. 1989. “Teddy Bear Patriarchy. Taxidermy in the Garden of Eden, New York City 1908-1936.” *Primate Visions. Gender, Race and Nature in the World of Modern Science*. London: Routledge, p. 26-58.

Levin, Amy K. 2010. “Straight Talk: Evolution Exhibits and the Reproduction of Heterosexuality.” In *Gender, Sexuality and Museums: A Routledge Reader*, ed. Amy K. Levin. Taylor & Francis, p. 201-211.

Further reading:  
Rebecca Machin, “Gender Representation in the Natural History Galleries at the Manchester Museum,” in *Gender, Sexuality and Museums: A Routledge Reader - Krisostomus*, ed. Amy K. Levin (Taylor & Francis, 2010), p. 187-200.

**PART III Larger-Than-Human Worlds**

**Week 6: Queer Non-Humans**

Stacy Alaimo. 2010. “Eluding Capture: The Science, Culture and Pleasure of ‘Queer’ Animals”. In: C. Mortimer-Sandilands and Bruce Erickson (eds.), *Queer Ecologies: Sex, Nature, Politics, Desire.* Bloomington: Indiana UP, p. 51 – 72.

J. Jack Halberstam. 2008. “Animating Revolt/Revolting Animation: Penguin Love, Doll Sex and the Spectacle of the Queer Nonhuman”. In: Noreen Giffney and Myra Hird (eds.) *Queering the Non/Human*. Ashgate, p. 265 – 282.

Further reading:

Deckha, Maneesha. 2012. “Toward a Postcolonial, Posthumanist Feminist Theory: Centralizing Race and Culture in Feminist Work on Nonhuman Animals.” *Hypatia* 27 (3): 527–545.

**Week 7: Transanimalities (Fieldtrip report due!)**

Hird, Myra. 2006. “Animal Transex.” *Australian Feminist Studies*, 21(49), 35-50.

Eva Hayward and Che Gossett, “Impossibility of That,” *Angelaki* 22, no. 2 (April 3, 2017): 15–24.

Further reading:

Karen Barad, “Transmaterialities: Trans\*/matter/realities and Queer Political Imaginings,” *GLQ* 21, no. 2–3 (01 2015): 387–422.

Harlan Weaver. 2015. “Pit Bull Promises Inhuman Intimacies and Queer Kinships in an Animal Shelter,” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 21, no. 2–3 (January 1, 2015): 343–63.

Eva Hayward. 2008. “Lessons from a Starfish.” In: Noreen Giffney and Myra Hird (eds.) *Queering the Non/Human*. Ashgate, p. 249 – 264.

**Week 8: Toxic Embodiments**

Mel Y. Chen, “Toxic Animacies, Inanimate Affections,” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 17, no. 2–3 (January 1, 2011): 265–86

Ah-King, Malin, and Eva Hayward. “Toxic Sexes: Perverting Pollution and Queering Hormone Disruption.” *O-zone: A Journal of Object Oriented Studies* 1 (2013), available online <http://static1.squarespace.com/static/50b4d1aee4b0214dc1f68c69/t/535f8235e4b09e1f27e83bd4/1398768181558/01_Ah-King_Hayward_Toxic+Sexes_OZone_Vol1.pdf> (12 pages)

Additional reading:  
Hogan, Katie. 2004. Detecting Toxic Environments: Gay Mystery as Environmental Justice. In *New Perspectives on Environmental Justice: Gender, Sexuality and Activism,* ed. Rachel Stein, 249–61. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press.

Berila, Beth. 2004. “Toxic Bodies? ACT UP’s Disruption of the Heteronormative Landscape of the Nation.” In *New Perspectives on Environmental Justice: Gender, Sexuality, and* *Activism*, ed. Rachel Stein. New Brunswick, N. J.: Rutgers University Press, 127-138.

**PART III Pink-Green Political Ecology**

**Week 9: Environmental Justice and Indigenous Rights**

Andrea Smith, “Queer Theory and Native Studies. The Heteronormativity of Settler Colonialism,” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 16, no. 1–2 (January 1, 2010): 41–68.

Tavia Nyong’o, “Little Monsters: Race, Sovereignty, and Queer Inhumanism in Beasts of the Southern Wild,” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 21, no. 2–3 (January 1, 2015): 249–72.

Further reading:  
Greta Gaard, “Indigenous Women, Feminism, and the Environmental Humanities,” *Resilience: A Journal of the Environmental Humanities* 1, no. 3 (2014), (14 pages).

**Week 10: Greenwashing and Pinkwashing (Final paper outline due!)**

Scott Lauria Morgensen, “Settler Homonationalism. Theorizing Settler Colonialism within Queer Modernities,” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 16, no. 1–2 (January 1, 2010): 105–31.

Gosine, Andil. 2001. “Pink Greens: Ecoqueers Organize in Toronto.” *Alternatives* 27.3: 35–36.

Further reading:

Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands: The New Mestiza/La Frontera* (San Francisco: Spinsters/Aunt Lute, 1987), 15–24.

**PART IV No Future! Queer Politics of Extinction**

**Week 11: Queering the Anthropocene**

Edelman, Lee. 1998. “The Future Is Kid Stuff: Queer Theory, Disidentification, and the Death Drive.” *Narrative* 6 (1) (January 1): 18–30.

Rose Deborah Bird. 2013. 'Slowly ~ Writing into the Anthropocene', *TEXT: Journal of Writing and Writing Programs*, vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 1 – 14.

Neel Ahuja, “Intimate Atmospheres Queer Theory in a Time of Extinctions,” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 21, no. 2–3 (January 1, 2015): 365–85.

Further reading:

Lee Edelman. 2004. *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*. Duke University Press Books.

Claire Colebrook. 2014. "Feminist Extinction" and "Ethics of Extinction" in: *Sex After Life: Essays on Extinction, Volume Two*, Open Humanities Press, p. 7-22 and 137-148. Available online <http://www.openhumanitiespress.org/books/titles/sex-after-life/>

Donna Haraway. 2016. “Making Kin. Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene” in: *Staying with the Trouble. Making Kin in the Chthulucene*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, p. 99-103.

**Week 12: Climate Change through Feminist New Materialist Lenses**

Tuana, Nancy. 2008. “Viscous Porosity: Witnessing Katrina.” In *Material Feminisms*, (eds.) Stacy Alaimo and Susan Hekman, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, p. 188–213.

Astrida Neimanis and Rachel Loewen Walker, “*Weathering*: Climate Change and the ‘Thick Time’ of Transcorporeality”, *Hypatia: Journal of Feminist Philosophy* (Special Issue on Climate Change), [Volume 29, Issue 3,](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/hypa.2014.29.issue-3/issuetoc) Summer 2014, p. 558–575.

Further reading:  
Coole, Diana, and Samantha Frost. 2010. “Introducing New Materialisms.” In *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics*, ed. Diana Coole and Samantha Frost, 1–43. Durham, London: Duke University Press Books.